

THE WORD OF TRUTH

Published Monthly

"And ye shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free"—Jno. 8:32.

Volume 19

JANUARY, 1975

Number 1

"Of His own will begat He us with the Word of Truth, that we might be a kind of firstfruits of His creatures" (James 1:18)

SET FOR THE DEFENSE OF THE GOSPEL

WHAT ABOUT THE HEATHEN?

From time to time we hear strong statements concerning the darkness that pervades the "heathen" segment of the world; i.e., that portion of the world where the Gospel is not *currently* being preached. Such statements, for example, as: "Why should anyone hear the Gospel twice while yet there remains some that have not heard it once?", have long intrigued this editor. It is to be admitted that there is a certain ring about these words that provoke an introspection that is more of an ungodly than a godly sort. To be sure, there is to be a concern among the redeemed for the spreading of the Gospel; indeed, wherever they are found, they are to "preach the Word," being "instant in season and out of season" (Acts 8:4; II Tim. 4:2). It is not the subject of preaching the Word that concerns us, but the matter of the analysis that some *uninformed* souls are pressing upon the church. I feel very strongly that there are some facts that ought to be made known to the contemporary church that are being hidden — facts that are *not* obscure facts, but firm historical data that the church has had in its possession for hundreds of years.

What about such nations as India, Africa, Ethiopia, Asia, Greece, etc.? That spiritual blindness and ignorance pervades these nations cannot be denied. But — why it does pervade these countries is the issue. Modern religious sophists tell us that it is because they have never heard the Gospel. This is not true! *The reason for the widespread prevalence of spiritual blindness in these countries is that they HAVE heard the Gospel, and they have rejected it so strongly as to bring the judgement of God upon themselves.* Let no one doubt this! Even in Paul's day, it was affirmed that the Gospel "was preached to every creature under heaven" (Col. 1:23), and that the faith of believers was spoken of "throughout all the world" (Rom. 1:8). Because this is so difficult to conceive by today's zealots, theoretical interpretation of these affirmations have been concocted which state that it was the "then known world" that Paul referred to, and not the world as we have come to know of it. The only difficulty with that is that the Scriptures were inspired by the Holy Spirit, not Paul; and we stand confident that the Spirit of God knows infinitely more about the scope and breadth of the world that even today's most learned men and expositors of the Scriptures. Further, reliable history attests that Paul, in fact, did speak the truth (not that we require the testimony of history!).

The accounts given of the martyrdom of the saints of old provide us with enough data to form a sound and spiritual conclusion concerning the reason for the alienation of the nations from God and His Christ. The Roman government,

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The Word of Truth

Published monthly by The Church at 78th and Independence, Merrillville, Indiana.

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Cedar Lake, Ind. 46303

Address all correspondence to 10701 W. 124th Ave.
Cedar Lake, Ind. 46303

Sent Free upon request to all interested parties.

SECOND CLASS POSTAGE PAID AT
CROWN POINT, INDIANA

"THE SPIRIT ITSELF MAKETH INTERCESSION FOR US"

"Likewise the Spirit also helpeth our infirmities: for we know not what we should pray for as we ought: but the Spirit Itself maketh intercession for us with groanings which cannot be uttered" — Romans 8:26

The life of faith is one of spiritual complexity, fleshly adversity, and intellectual consternation! Strictly speaking, the varied experiences of the believer are not subject to philosophical analysis, and can properly be interpreted only in the Scriptures. The work of God is too high for fleshly comprehension; too broad for mere mortal vision; too deep for probings of mere human sophistry! As God is higher than man and His thoughts and ways higher than our thoughts and ways (Isa. 55:8, 9), so are His works incomprehensible to His creatures. Whatever we have come to learn of the Kingdom of God, it must be confessed that "flesh and blood hath not revealed it unto thee, but" our "Father which is in heaven" (Matt. 16:16-18). Notwithstanding, however, this somewhat disconcerting situation, we have good reason for hope. Our Father in heaven, through the Lord Jesus Christ, and by the Spirit of our God, has made provision for our infirmity of ignorance. Our text gloriously sets forth this truth.

Observe where this text is situated

The Apostle Paul has been establishing to our hearts evidences of our sonship; both from the legal and from the experiential viewpoints. He has declared, in the power of the Spirit, that we have been "justified" (Rom. 5:1), and that we do, indeed, "have peace with God." Further, we have been "reconciled" through the death of His Son, and shall yet "be saved through His life"; i.e., through His wonderful intercessory work for us (Rom. 5:10). These are the facts in the case, whether they seem to be reasonable or not; whether they are perceived or not; whether they are "felt" or not! But we also have the testimony of experience; that experience which found us obeying the Lord. We were actually "baptized into His (Christ's) death", that "like as Christ was raised from the dead by the glory of the Fa-

ther, even so we also should walk in newness of life" (Rom. 6:3,4). When we submitted to be baptized, we were "obeying from the heart that FORM of doctrine which was delivered to us" (Rom. 6:17): i.e., the doctrine was the truth of Christ's death, burial, and resurrection. That doctrine was gracious contained in the **form** of baptism, wherein we were buried into death, and raised to walk in newness of life. The fact that we heartily, willingly, and eagerly submitted to this ordinance becomes a testimony to our conscience that we are, in fact, purged from our sins. Indeed, it was the "answer of a good conscience toward God" (I Pet. 3:21). Upon the basis of that testimony we "reckon ourselves to be dead indeed unto sin, and alive unto God" (Rom. 6:11), choosing to believe God concerning our true state in Christ rather than the misguided testimony of our own hearts (Jer. 17:11).

Too, we also have the witness of the inner conflict. Now that we are in Christ we have come to learn what that meaneth: "The flesh lusteth against the Spirit, and the Spirit against the flesh; and these two are contrary one to the other, so that ye cannot do the things that ye would" (Gal. 5:17). Indeed, we find all too often that we do not really "allow" (or permit) the things that we do. In fact, we are plagued with involuntary reflexes of the mind (Rom. 7:15, 10, 21). Our purposes seem too quickly to fall to the ground; we are not able to set an adequate watch before our minds. Wicked and contemptible thoughts rush into them betimes quite without our permission, without our welcome, and without reception. They must with violence be "cast down" and taken "captive to the obedience of Christ" (II Cor. 10:3-5). We find in Christ Jesus that we also possess an immeasurable degree of ignorance; "**How** to perform that which is good I find not" (Rom. 7:18). Our wills resolve, our hearts purpose, but we find ourselves deficient in the matter of ability. Truly, this condition brings about a sort of spiritual frustration which compels us to cry out; "Wretched man that I am, who shall deliver me from the body of this death" (Rom. 7:24). Indeed, we "have this treasure in earthen vessels that the excellency of the power might be of God, and not of us" (II Cor. 4:7).

This entire condition of inner conflict and warfare is the "sufferings" to which Paul refers in the next chapter; "I reckon that the sufferings of this present time are not worthy to be compared with the glory which shall be revealed in us" (Rom. 8:18). It is not the suffering which comes from the **expression** of sin — that is not excusable, so to speak. It is, rather, the "suffering" that comes from having to fight battles **within** our own persons; battles which involve the casting down of repulsive and hateful thoughts and assaults against our minds. "Sufferings" however, is a surface term; i.e., it denotes something which we may diagnose; something which we may, in part, analyze. For instance; "That which I do, I allow not; for what I would, that do I not; but what I hate, that do I . . . how to perform that which is good I find not . . . I see another law in my members, warring against the law of my mind, and bringing me into captivity to the law of sin and death which is in my

members" (Rom. 7:15, 18, 23). Now, that is a spiritual analysis of inner conflict, and it is appropriately termed "sufferings" by the Holy Spirit. Those that are experiencing these things require no further explanation.

However, there is a portion of our present condition which is not subject to analysis; something which is not so readily diagnosed by the believer. It goes beneath his ability to perceive; it is beyond the capability of his conscience! The experience of which I speak is similar to the one described in Romans the seventh chapter, except it is deeper, more profound; something of which we would be totally ignorant were it not for the gracious revelations of God. This condition is described by the word "groanings" (Rom. 8:23), and is also referred to by the general term "infirmities" (Rom. 8:26). The condition is brought about because we possess (in Christ) a superior spirit and an inferior body; a regenerated basic nature, and an unregenerated secondary nature; a renewal of purpose, but a retention of the old means of implementation (our "members"); two natures that are at variance with one another, and which can by no means be reconciled!

The Results Of This Condition

It is vital for us to know that this entire condition of warfare and conflict is by Divine design! Our heavenly Father has deliberately given us this treasure of the Divine presence in an earthen vessel in order to His own glory. How wonderfully this works! Observe: because we are in this "wretched condition", unable to satisfactorily implement our wills; unable to stop this flood of ungodly notions from invading our minds; unable to perform that which we wholeheartedly desire — in this condition, we are thrust upon "hope"; anticipating deliverance! "For we are saved by hope: but hope that is seen is not hope: for what a man seeth, why doth he yet hope for? But if we hope for that we see not, then do we with patience wait for it" (Rom. 8:24, 25). There is a deliverance coming, praise the Lord: and our very condition is fitting us for an appreciation of it! Lift up your heads, weary saints; your Father has "wrought" you to inhabit a better tabernacle, a better land, a better habitation (II Cor. 5:1-5). Do not be overcome by your situation, but rather convert it into an advantage! So what if we suffer; so what if we groan! Does this not point out the truth to us that this world is not our home; that it is not our resting place; that it is polluted? (Micah 2:10). Can you not see that were our present condition ideal, or even predominately pleasant, we could not be possessed of hope? But now hope becomes our "anchor", cast within the veil, and giving us a glorious connection and rapport with the world to come! Certainly, therefore, all these things are not "against me" (Gen. 42:36).

Further, coming into this state of inner conflict, we have finally experienced true evolution within the natural order. Prior to our experience of redemption, the "whole creation" had the advance on us as they are "groaning and traveling in pain together until now" (Rom. 8:22). In fact the "earnest expectation of the creature waiteth for the manifestation of the sons of God", for then "the creature itself also shall be delivered from the bondage of corruption into the glorious

liberty of the children of God" (Rom. 8:19-21). O, how far in advance of the unregenerate are they! And yet, in Christ Jesus we have finally arisen to the level of the brute and inanimate creation in this matter of groaning; "And not only they, but ourselves also, which have the firstfruits of the Spirit, even we ourselves groan within ourselves waiting for the adoption, to wit, the redemption of the body" (Rom. 8:23). There is a unity that only God could produce; the unity of groaning and unintelligible anticipation.

Permit me to underscore the fact that this groaning is not subject to intellectual analysis — indeed, it is thoroughly beyond our capability of discernment! It is too high for us, but it is experiential! It is too vague and mysterious for our minds, but it is real and truth! How this truth is evidenced in our text:

"We Know Not What To Pray For As We Ought"

Truly, we do have infirmities — infirmities of understanding, discernment, knowledge, and general perception. When it comes to certain deeper and more profound aspects of the Kingdom of God, we are not only ignorant of them, we are completely incapable of discerning them. We are presently in possession of no sensible or intellectual faculties which are capable of fully grasping the deep and profound will of God for His people. Indeed, "It hath not entered the heart of man the things that God hath prepared for them that love Him" (I Cor. 2:10ff). But this is not a helpless situation! We are not thrust upon our own abilities; we are not limited by our own feeble knowledge; "The Spirit also helpeth our infirmities"; i.e., not only are our infirmities assisted by "hope" which "saves us", but they are also assisted in the area wherein hope cannot flourish because of our blindness. You see, we are so limited while "in the body", that we do not even "know what to pray for as we ought". It does not say that we "sometimes" do not know; it states that we "KNOW NOT"; i.e., that this situation remains unchanged throughout our earthly tenure! These "infirmities" of which the Lord speaks are those with which we are "compassed" like the priests of old (Heb. 5:2). These are the "infirmities", the "feeling" of which touch our Lord Jesus Himself (Heb. 4:15). While these infirmities cannot be explained intelligibly, they can be felt — and the Lord can be touched with those "FEELINGS"; how I praise the Lord for that! These "infirmities" are the very ones that fit us for the strength of the Lord (II Cor. 12:5, 9, 10).

From an earthly scientific view, these infirmities are traceable to our flesh; "I speak after the manner of men because of the infirmity of your FLESH" (Rom. 6:19). Now, the significance of this is overwhelming when once seen. Actually, in Christ Jesus, the inferior part of our entire being is our humanity, together with its intellect, sensibilities, etc. Have you not found that your intellect is the very last part of your person to grasp the truth of Christ; if, indeed, it grasps it at all? Do we not often find need to exclaim; "How unsearchable are Thy judgements and Thy ways past finding out" (Rom. 11:33). God's judgements truly "are a great deep" (Psa. 36:6), and His "thoughts are very deep" (Psa. 92:5),

transcending all mortal capacity and ability! But, at this point, where our capacities fail us, and become bereft of strength and ability, the Spirit of our God takes over! Hallelujah! He "helpeth" this situation, so that I am not left comfortless or helpless; indeed, I still have intercession made for me!

This "intercession" is not intelligible to me, but it is to God, and that is what counts! The Holy Spirit takes these groanings, these spiritual aspirations of mine — where my spirit is crying out for the fulfilling of the high and undiscernible purpose of God — and lifts them up to the Heavenly Father Who graciously receives them, knowing their true significance; "And He that searcheth the hearts knoweth what is the mind of the Spirit, because He maketh intercession for the saints according to the will of God" (Rom. 8:27). Now, at this point, we are, for all practical purposes **out** of the picture. We "know not" what we should pray for; we are not even aware of it in our minds. It is not perceived by us to any measurable degree. **It is the Spirit that helps us! It is the Spirit that makes intercession for us! It is the "mind of the Spirit" that God "knows"! It is the Spirit that makes intercession FOR the saints"! It is the Spirit that presents the matter according to the will of God!** In the whole matter we are benefactors! We have initiated nothing! The Spirit has performed the work! He has wrought the groanings, lifted them up to God in an intercessory fashion, as it were, interpreted them to the Father in Divine and fully acceptable terms (I speak as a man).

The Inferiority Of Our Knowledge

You will bear with me while I tear down the idol of human knowledge! We live in a land that has exalted the intellect. It is, indeed, an idol in our culture. **But in the Divine economy, it is the inferior part.** However far one advances in the Kingdom, he still must admit openly, freely, and without any reservation whatsoever; "We know in PART" (I Cor. 13:12). Is it not true that however learned in spiritual things we are, we still "see through a glass **darkly**" (I Cor. 13:12b). Who knows to any appreciable measure, for example, what it means to be "conformed to the image of His Son" (Rom. 8:29), or the extent of the "inheritance" that is laid up for us, "reserved in heaven" (I Pet. 1:4). What man upon this earth is capable of comprehending the time when there shall be "**no more curse**" (Rev. 22:3), or what is entailed when it is declared "We shall be like Him, for we shall see Him as He is" (I Jno. 3:1). You see, these things are too high for our minds — but not for our hearts, praise the Lord. Faith grasps them, clings to them, and fights for them, even though they are not fully sifted through the understanding!

Now our inferior knowledge would more greatly inhibit us were it not for the Spirit that "maketh intercession for us according to the will of God"! We are infinitely more helpless than we dare to imagine; and we also owe far more to the work of the Holy Spirit than we ordinarily suppose. The evils and mysteries of this life seem to daze our spirits, so that without Divine assistance, we should go immediately to hell upon our death as did the rich man (Luke 16). Let us with one

heart and one mouth glorify God for this wonderful provision of the intercession of the Holy Spirit. Now we have not only an intercessor in heaven, but one also upon earth, so that we may confess we are greatly blessed of our Father.

The Groanings In Which He Intercedes

These groanings, once again, are not intelligible to us — but they are to our Father in Heaven. **Further, were it not for the work of the Holy Spirit, there would be no groanings, and there would be no "searching of the hearts" by the Father with a mind to fulfill His will of conforming us to the image of His Son!** These "groanings" are peculiar to those who dwell in these "houses of clay" (Job 4:19). "For in this (tabernacle, or earthly body) we do GROAN, earnestly desiring to be clothed upon with our house which is from heaven. . . . For we that are in this tabernacle do groan, being burdened: not for that we would be unclothed, but clothed upon, that mortality might be swallowed up of life" (II Cor. 5:2, 4). Further, groanings are heard of God (Ex. 2:24; 6:5; Judges 2:18; Psa. 6:6; 38:9; 102:19-20).

In these groanings, the Spirit, as it were, blends with our spirits. This is God's provision for Himself; His own means of "bringing us to glory", even though our understanding and knowledge is **designedly deficient!** You see, our infirmities have produced needs — needs of which we are not even aware; therefore the need for this Divine Intercessor! Believers know that they groan — **but they know it because it has been revealed to them.** Further, their understanding of these groanings is limited to the fact that they **do** exist. You might call this "spiritual instinct", for want of a better term.

"All Things Work Together For Good"

Romans 8:28 has long been a favorite of God's people; and it owes its reality to this wonderful
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What About The Heathen

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for example, martyred James the Great in 44 A.D., beheading him; Nero beheaded Paul, and had Peter crucified. Asia added to guilt by crucifying Philip in Phrygia in 54 A.D., Andrew in Edessa, and also Jude in the same city. Ethiopia martyred Matthew, Alexandria, Greece dragged Mark until his body literally fell into pieces, and crucified Luke the beloved physician on an olive tree. Thomas and Bartholomew both labored faithfully in India, and their labors were rewarded in this way: Bartholomew was beaten and crucified, and Thomas was thrust thru with a spear by an idolatrous priest. Simon labored in Britain, and Britain in turn crucified him. Barnabas was slain near Cyprus. Jerusalem, with all of the wondrous revelation given to it shed the blood of James the less and Matthias, following that inimitable saint Stephen. So, you see, there really are no innocent nations! Because they did not receive the love of the truth that they might be saved, the Lord "sent them strong delusion, that they might believe a lie" (II Thess. 2:9-11). That delusion took the form of Mohammedanism, Hinduism, Confusionism, etc. **It is truly their penalty for hearing the glorious Gospel of Christ and then slaying those that brought the message through God's grace!** The nations are needy, but **not innocent!**

SATAN HAS BEEN DEFEATED!

It is a grand Gospel that we have been given to preach! It proclaims the Lord Jesus Christ as the "only Begotten of the Father, full of grace and truth" (Jno. 1:14); the One through Whom redemption is proclaimed, even the "forgiveness of sins" (Acts 10:43). The Gospel proclaims a God that has "seen the travail of His (Christ's) soul", and is thoroughly "satisfied" (Isa. 53:11), and a God that is "Blessed" — happy and jubilant over the vicarious atonement that has been wrought out by His Only Begotten Son (I Tim. 1:11). This is the "Gospel of God" (Rom. 15:16) that we announce; a gospel that sets God forth as the One that has actually "made" Christ to be unto us "wisdom, and righteousness, and sanctification, and redemption" (I Cor. 1:30). **Whatever the Gospel contains — all of it — is properly called "the TRUTH of the Gospel"** (Gal. 2:5) because it sets forth ultimate and final reality! Because the Gospel announces a reconciliation between God and man, it is called "the Gospel of peace" (Eph. 6:15). Yet, because it is so profound, and so transcendent to man's finite understanding, it is referred to as the "mystery of the Gospel" (Eph. 6:19). Once heard and embraced, this Gospel, being one that proclaims wonderful things to come, creates the "hope of the Gospel" (Col. 1:23). Because, on the other hand, the Gospel announces that our Father which is in heaven has not dealt with men according to their iniquities, but rather according to His abundant mercy, it is called "The gospel of the grace of God" (Acts 20:24).

Now, it is imperative that believers understand that **none of these things could be realities were Satan not overthrown and defeated completely and finally by our Lord and Savior.** Our salvation is really no salvation if Satan remains undefeated! That is why great care is taken in the Holy Scriptures to set the record straight concerning our adversary. While Satan does possess prowess, and is a master deceiver, **he is powerless against the truth.** Anyone and everyone that knows the truth "shall be made free" (Jno. 8:32, 36). While Satan has "deceived the whole world" (Rev. 12:9), it IS deception that he has employed, **not force!** That is an important thing to observe, for it points up the grand defeat and spoiling of our adversary!

Before our Lord was betrayed, crucified, buried, raised, and ascended, He declared; "NOW is the judgement of this world: NOW shall the prince of this world be cast out" (Jno. 12:31). Again, He asserted, "Of judgement because the prince of this world IS judged" (Jno. 6:11). It is now pointedly stated by the Apostle Paul that God has now "delivered us from the POWER OF DARKNESS. . . ." (Col. 1:3), and how could these things be were not Satan defeated? Concerning the cross of Christ, the Holy Spirit says; "Having spoiled principalities and powers, He made a show of them openly, **triumphing** over them in it" (Col. 2:15). **While the cross appeared to men to be the overthrow of Jesus of Nazareth, it was, in reality, the overthrow of Satan.** If Jesus really did die (and it is certain that He did!) then Satan really has been spoiled, defeated, overthrown!

Elsewhere, it is declared, for the comfort of the saints: "Forasmuch then as the children are partakers of flesh and blood, He also Himself took

part of the same; that through death He might **destroy Him that had the power of death**, that is, the devil" (Heb. 2:14). Note that, dear believer! It was "THROUGH DEATH" that Jesus "DESTROYED" SATAN! Death was Satan's power — but **Jesus destroyed that power and the holder of it, Satan!** In fact, Satan does not even have the power of death any longer. **It is declared that he "HAD", not has, the power of death!** Oh! what a Gospel is this. Surely it needs to be proclaimed more! Satan has, then, been destroyed in this sense of the word, his power being wrested from him by his Superior and Lord! So thorough is this destruction, that if you but "resist the Devil, he will flee from you" (Js. 4:7). Men that have been redeemed now "overcome the wicked one" (I Jno. 3:13), thereby demonstrating his absolute inferiority to the kingdom of God. In fact, "He that is begotten of God keepeth himself, and that wicked one toucheth him not" (I Jno. 5:18). How could these things be were Satan not defeated? Is it not proclaimed that Christ Jesus appeared "for this purpose . . . that He might destroy the works of the devil" (I Jno. 3:8), and is there one among the household of faith that would dare to postulate that our Lord did not accomplish this? It is true that Satan "hinders" (I Thess. 2:18), employs "devices" (II Cor. 2:11), blinds men's minds (II Cor. 4:4), "deceives" (Rev. 12:9), and "works in the children of disobedience" (Eph. 2:2) — and yet in every one of these cases, he employs the lie, deception, untruth — not spiritual power; not authority! **The heart that is garrisoned with the Truth is impervious to the effectual attack of Satan.** Satan may create situations and delusions which cause us trouble; he may hinder us in some aspects, raise tempests and storms against us — but **he does not do it at will;** i.e., he only employs those tactics which our Father permits him to employ. He cannot go beyond that hedge which the Lord has placed about believers. Now, this could not possibly be true if he had not been defeated. We could not effectually resist him, the truth could not stifle his attacks, the shield of faith could not quench his fiery darts, **we could not overcome him, and he would "touch us", if he had been bound and spoiled** (Matt. 12:29). Satan's head has been "bruised" according to the ancient promise (Gen. 3:15), and that bruise has sent him reeling from the presence of the Lord. He cannot accuse the saints before God any longer; he cannot effectually fight against their hope of glory; he cannot pierce through their shield of faith; he cannot batter the helmet of salvation to pieces; he cannot wrest the sword of the Spirit from their hands, the girdle of truth from their loins, or the sandals of the gospel of peace from their feet. The breastplate of righteousness which they wear is indestructible, and shatters the accusations of the evil one! Why? **Because of the mighty victory of our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ!** In Christ we are superior to Satan! Yea, we are "more than conquerors" in all those things which he hurls at us!

Satan knows he has been defeated and spoiled; the angels know it, for they were holy attendants in the victory, even announcing it that first glorious morning (Matt. 28:6); the "spirits of just

men made perfect" know it; our Heavenly Father knows it; the Lord Jesus knows it; the Holy Spirit knows it; the cherubim and seraphim know it — it only remains for that portion of the church which is "yet in the world" (I Pet. 5:9) to know it! Circumstances may seem to tell us that Satan has **not** been defeated; our own heart and natures may also seem to attest that apparent testimony — but he has still been "destroyed"; he has still been "spoiled"; he has still fallen "as lightning from heaven"! He is **not** invincible; he is **not** omniscient; he is **not** omnipotent; **he cannot stand against those that by faith resist him!** He may stir up the waters, but he cannot sink the ship; he may agitate the heart, but he cannot shake that living hope; he may raise the winds, but he cannot effect the peace and tranquility of the heart that trusts in the Lord Jesus! He cannot nullify the effectuality of the blood of Christ, take us off of the solid rock, or move us a single cubit from the heavenly places in which we have been raised to sit (Eph. 1:1-5). He may author and perpetuate tribulation because of our faith; he may bring distress upon us, or instigate a persecution against the saints of the Most High God: He may blast them with famine, nakedness, peril, or even the sword. He may see them counted as "sheep for the slaughter", and declare that they are "killed all the day long" — but after all is said and done; after he has emptied his arsenal of weapons and exhausted his supply of delusions: whether we are standing upright on our feet, or smitten even to our knees; whether we be faint and weak from the battle, or the smoke and darkness of this life slightly cloud our vision, yet by faith we may smile at our motley foe and cry out by faith, and in joy; **"NAY, IN ALL THESE THINGS WE ARE MORE THAN CONQUERORS THROUGH HIM THAT LOVED US"** (Rom. 8:35-38). Whether our adversary come at us with death, or even with a weary and laden life; whether his angels attack us in all of their apparent strength, or the principalities of darkness, or powers of the evil kingdom come against us; whether the old serpent assault us with things that are seen, things that are present, or things that are to come — **"KNOWING** xzxv vbxv vbxv cmcccm
"NOTHING SHALL BE ABLE TO SEPARATE US FROM THE LOVE OF GOD WHICH IS IN CHRIST JESUS OUR LORD!" (Rom. 8:38-39). Why? Why can these wondrous proclamations be so? Simply because Satan has, in reality, been **DEFEATED!** Praise the Lord, ye that have fled to Him for refuge!!

"The Spirit Itself Maketh Intercession for Us"

(From page 4)

truth; a truth that immediately precedes it in the Scriptures; "Likewise the Spirit also helpeth our infirmities: for we know not what to pray for as we ought: but the Spirit Itself maketh intercession for us in groanings which cannot be uttered. And He that searcheth the hearts knoweth what is the mind of the Spirit, because He maketh intercession for the saints according to the will of God" (Rom. 8:26, 27). And can you, dear reader, perceive the wonder of this provision?

DO YOU WANT TO BE TAKEN OR LEFT?

Eschatology — the study of last things — is, as one might suspect, a very confused area for theologians. It seems that it is difficult enough for mortals to analyze present things, without thrusting themselves into an analysis of things to come. For this reason alone, we ought to be very cautious in our acceptance of dogmas concerning the latter days. God has very graciously given us some degree of revelation concerning the future, but it is given in such a way that only the spiritual and inquiring mind may glean any significant degree of truth. It would appear to this writer as though the Lord purposely veiled His revelation of coming things so as to "confound the wise" and "bring to nothing the wisdom of the world" (I Cor. 1:19, 27). These days there is much activity in theological circles concerning prophecy — prophetic conferences, studies, etc. Men use the pulpits of the land to perpetrate dogmas that have been handed down to them of their fathers — dogmas that may appropriately be called "vain tradition" (I Pet. 1:18). Among these varied and diverse dogmas is that of the "rapture", which is purported to be the removal of the saints from 'the great tribulation' — or, more accurately, the removal of the saints from the earth **BEFORE** the inception of the great tribulation. So widespread is this teaching that those who do not embrace it are viewed as spiritual freaks, being thrust out of the presence of those sophists that value mortal tradition more than Divine revelation. But we would have it known without shame, and without any reservation or apology whatsoever that we are not only among those that do not accept this dogma, but that we are firmly set against it and determined to repudiate it in every way we can — whether it be public, private, or through the written page.

The doctrine of which we speak is called theologically Pre-millennialism. It is presently associated with "fundamental" churches — whatever the term "fundamental" is designed to connote. In short, it teaches that believers will be taken away — removed from the earth — prior to the consummation of all things; specifically, before a great period of tribulation which, say they, shall be brought upon the wicked for their failure to accept the Lord's Christ. In particular, this statement concerning some being taken and some being left is cited for the general comfort of those that are anticipating this secret and massive "rapture", or catching away: "Then two shall be in the field: the **one shall be taken, and the other left.** Two women shall be grinding at the mill: **one shall be taken and the other left"** (Matt. 24:40-41).

The Evil Are The Ones To Be Taken

One point of reference made by the Holy Spirit is completely overlooked by the promulgators of this doctrine; namely, that it is the **ungodly** that are said to be taken, **not** the godly. Our Lord Jesus specifically states that this taking shall be "as it was in the days of Noah"; "in the days before the flood they were eating and drinking, marrying and giving in marriage, until the day that Noah entered into the ark, and knew not until the flood came, and took **THEM** all away; so shall also the coming of the Son of man be"

(Matt. 24:38-39). Was it Noah that was taken or the ungodly? Was not Noah LEFT and the wicked taken? Ought not the most simple in the Kingdom be able to discern this with clarity? What does this truth do for the "rapture" theory? It destroys it, and shows it to be the foolish prattling of unlearned and ignorant men!

Further, throughout all the Scripture we are repeatedly taught that it is the wicked, the unrighteous, the profane, and the unspiritual that are aken away. To give but a few references: the Lord takes away iniquity (II Sam. 24:10), dross (Prov. 25:4), the wicked (Prov. 25:5), the judges of the earth (Isa. 40:24), the detestable things (Ezek. 11:18), stony hearts (Ezek. 36:26), disobedient rebels (Hos. 1:6), reproach (Gen. 30:23), burdens (Isa. 10:27), wicked kings (Hos. 13:11), etc. Now, this may seem irrelevant to the unlearned — but it is not! All through the Scriptures we are taught that the wicked are the intruders; that the tares are the invaders of the field; that "all things" belong to believers; that the meek shall inherit the earth; that the wicked, and all things associated with the wicked, are to be removed! We are over and again explicitly taught to associate the very concept of removal with that which is undesirable. Now, with these things in our hearts and minds, suddenly upon the horizon of theology arises this doctrine that states the righteous shall be removed, not the wicked; a doctrine that teaches us that while we openly confessed the Lord before men, and owned Him publicly, He shall remove us secretly; that the wicked will be left, not the righteous!

But these things do not at all comport with revelation. The Egyptians were taken away at the Red Sea, and Israel was LEFT! Sodom and Gomorrah were taken away, and Lot was LEFT! The ancient world was taken away, and Noah was LEFT! The accusers of Daniel were taken away, and Daniel was LEFT! The tares were taken away, and the wheat was LEFT! The bad fish were cast away, and the good fish were LEFT! The old nature passes away, and the new one is LEFT! The Old Testament passed away, and the New Testament is LEFT! The first heaven and the first earth shall pass away, and the new ones shall be LEFT! Over and over, we are taught that the old is supplanted by the new, not the new by the old; that the old is taken, not the new. Without going into more examples this ought to suffice to assist those that are confused in searching out the real truth on this issue; namely the wicked are to be taken, and the righteous left: "Let both grow together until the harvest: and AT THE TIME OF THE HARVEST I will say to the reapers, GATHER YE TOGETHER FIRST THE TARES, and bind them in bundles to burn them: but gather the wheat into my barn" (Matt. 13:30).

Language Associated With Rapture Theory Not In The Scriptures

To further highlight the humanism of this dogma, it ought to be pointed out that the great pivotal terms that are used to express this heresy are not even found in the Scriptures. For instance, the following words and phrases, in their preciseness, owe their origin to men, not to God: "rapture", "THE great tribulation", "THE anti-christ", "the second phase of His coming", "the

third coming". While the Word of God mentions "great tribulation", it does not mention "THE great tribulation", while it mentions "the spirit of antichrist", it does not mention "THE anti-christ". This would not seem to be of any especial consequence, except for the fact that these words are very basic to the establishment of the heresy to which we refer.

Simply Believing Is The Answer

Joyfully we acknowledge that we desire to be "left", not "taken" in the Scriptural sense of these words. When the first heavens and the first earth have passed away, we want to be left; after the tares have been gathered, we want to be left; after the world has passed away, and the lust thereof, we want to be left! The Scriptures speak of those that do the will of God as "ABIDING", not leaving (I Jno. 2:15-17). While the entire natural order, together with everything that has been bound to it (including the wicked) passes away, those that have taken residence in that unmovable kingdom shall remain; forever to be with the Lord. We find this a most joyous contemplation! But what of you? Do you desire to be taken or left?

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THE WAR WITHIN

"I find then, a law, that, when I would do good, evil is present with me" —

Romans 7:21

There are a variety of laws mentioned in the Scriptures: "The law of Moses" (Jno. 7:23), "the law of my mind" (Rom. 7:23); "another law in my members" (Rom. 7:23a), "the law of sin" (Rom. 7:25), "the law of life" (Rom. 8:2), "the perfect law of liberty" (Js. 1:25), "the royal law of love" (Js. 2:8), etc. A law is a rule, a principle, a kind of precept that has been established, and which operates under given conditions. The law of Moses, for instance (elsewhere referred to as "the law of God" (Ezra 12:26), and "the law of the Lord" (Isa. 30:9) as well as "the ten commandments" (Deut. 5:13) was given that "every mouth might be stopped and all the world become guilty before God" (Rom. 3:19). It was a gauge by which the exceeding sinfulness of sin was measured, and it is operative toward "the lawless and disobedient, for the ungodly and for sinners, for unholy and profane, for murderers of fathers and murderers of mothers, for manslayers, for whoremongers, for them that defile themselves with mankind, for menstealers, for liars, for purjured persons, and if there be any other thing that is contrary to sound doctrine" (I Tim. 1:9). This law, as well as all other laws of Scriptural mention, operates without contradiction in its realm — that is why it is called a "law"; something that is marked by regularity, consistency, rule, and principle.

The law to which I desire to devote especial attention here is one that resides only within the regenerate — and it is most assuredly a law! It is, further, a law that is to be "found" or discovered by the believer; i.e., it may not be as readily apparent and subject to discreet observation as one might suppose. Indeed, many live within the fold of Christ for long periods of time before they come into an awareness of this law. It is, further,

the concerted opinion of this editor that some have passed completely through this veil of tears without ever comprehending this law with any measured degree of knowledge. Nevertheless, the law is positive and without contradiction: "WHEN I WOULD DO GOOD, EVIL IS PRESENT WITH ME"! That is a LAW, not a suggestion, not something with which the believer occasionally wrestles — but a LAW! It takes some element of spiritual involvement, concentration, analysis, and keen-sightedness to "find" this law; and when it is found, it will be seen to be "in my members". From that area (our "members" or faculties) it wars "against the law" of our minds, and "brings us into captivity to the law of sin which is in my members" (Rom. 7:23). That may sound morbid; it may sound something less than desirable — but however it sounds, however it may or may not fit into the theological patterns of thought which one has embraced, **it is truth** that cannot be gainsayed for a single moment!

The seventh chapter of Romans has been the center of controversy for theologians for many years. Some suppose that it is a declaration of the believer BEFORE he was a believer; others, of the one that is bound under a state of law, without redemption or the forgiveness of sins. But such analyses of this venerable chapter only betray a lamentable ignorance of what is plainly stated. The entire analysis of inner conflict is accompanied by words of present active tense, not past tense: "I AM carnal, sold under sin" (verse 14); "that which I DO . . . what I hate, that DO I" (verse 15); "Now then, it is no more I that DO it, but sin that DWELLETH in me" (verse 17); "For I know that in me, that is in my flesh DWELLETH no good thing" (verse 18); ". . . evil is PRESENT with me" (verse 21); "I see another law in my members WARRING against the law of my mind, and BRINGING me into captivity to the law of sin which is in my members" (verse 23). Now those are certainly not words that may in any sense be taken as pertaining to the past; **they are current words, present descriptions — something through which the writer was actually passing!** If this point is missed, a great deal of needless frustration shall rise in the hearts of the sincere.

Now these descriptions are not given to make the believer comfortable, or to cause him to excuse and treat blithely this wretched state to which we illude; God forbid! It is rather an interpretation graciously given to us by the Holy Spirit in order that we might not think some "strange thing" is happening to us. Let none seek to excuse their expressions of sin with this passage, for those that do so will incur the sure judgement of the Almighty! He will not be

mocked in regard to expressions of the flesh, and to sowing and reaping (Gal. 6:7, 8).

The discovery of this principle, or law, within our members is predicated by a sincere and wholesome desire to "do good"; "When I would do good, evil is present with me". That is **not** to say that evil is only present with us when we **would** do good — would to God that this were the case! It is to say that it is **evident**, or comes more acutely to our attention when we **would** do good. It also should be observed that **the more we are involved with that "GOOD and acceptable and perfect will of God" (Rom. 12:1-2), the more this "law" of which we speak, will come to our vivid attention.** Until that time, these things are only theological dogma, and heartless observations. The point is not the **mere presence** of evil, but the **militancy** of that evil; "I see another law in my members WARRING against the law of my mind . . ." (verse 23). **Were it not for that militancy, it would be quite conceivable that we could more pleasantly tolerate this situation.** But, make no mistake about it, we do NOT live in a spiritual vacuum; our very condition in Christ Jesus has thrust us into a state of inner conflict that involves inviolable laws!

This condition, grievous as it may be, wrought by the design of our Heavenly Father. Firstly, it is most conducive to "hope", by which we are saved (Rom. 8:24, 25). Being in a state wherein we often cry, "wretched man that I am, who shall I deliver me from the body of this death" (Rom. 7:24), we more strongly look for that "house" which we have in heaven; a "souse" not made with hands, eternal in the heavens (II Cor. 5:1-4). Our only relief in this state is found in a "lively hope", to which we have deliberately been "begotten" (I Pet. 1:3-4). The life of ease and comfort has been carefully avoided by our Lord in our creation. **We have been wrought for earthly wretchedness and for heavenly bliss!** Our "reason for being here" is not merely to grace the earth with influence (that is but a secondary feature of this great salvation), but to fundamentally and primarily prepare us for the "world to come" (Heb. 2:5). **That purpose, by its very nature, necessitates an acute awareness of the inferiority of our present condition, and the primary and basic iniquity of this "present evil world."** Thus does our two-fold nature bring this to light, thereby creating that hope by which we are, in fact, saved! When, therefore, we experience this inner conflict, we ought not to imagine that some "strange thing" has happened unto us, for these "same afflictions are ACCOMPLISHED in our brethren that are in the world" (I Pet. 5:9). God has placed this "treasure" in "earthen vessels" that the "excellency of the power might be of" Him, and not of us (II Cor. 4:7). A sense of our wretchedness because of the inner drawings toward earth, then, is a sense of our earthen vessels; while a sensitivity to our high and exalted position in Christ, whereby we are constituted "more than conquerors" (Rom. 8:37) is actually an awareness of the treasure! **Because "hope" necessitates the realization of both of these facts, the struggles of Romans 7 are experienced.**

Ought not insight into the deliberateness of our condition bring an element of cheer to our hearts?